

NEWS

From the County of San Bernardino **Josie Gonzales Fifth District**

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**JGFDS-PR-201 SUPERVISOR COMMENTS ON ARREST OF PASADENA BROTHERS
FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
LISHA SMITH AT (909) 387-4565**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUPERVISOR GONZALES COMMENTS ON ARREST OF PASADENA BROTHERS

SAN BERNARDINO – San Bernardino County 5th District Supervisor Josie Gonzales today praised her chief of staff and District Attorney officials for their roles in the arrest of Arshak and Vartan Kouladjian on bribery charges.

The Kouladjian brothers of Pasadena were arrested Wednesday following a four-month investigation by District Attorney Mike Ramos' Public Integrity Unit. The investigation was opened when Gonzales' Chief of Staff Bob Page reported concerns about Arshak Kouladjian's actions.

"It deeply saddens me, and angers me, that anyone would think bribery would be tolerated in San Bernardino County," Gonzales said.

"It is unfortunate that in the past there have been situations involving corruption however that was 10 years ago," Gonzales acknowledged. "Today there is no room at the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors for anything but honest, upstanding, ethical behavior. Corruption is a behavior."

"The Kouladjian brothers were grossly mistaken if they thought my office was for sale," Gonzales added. "My staff and I try to help everyone who requests our assistance getting County services whether they are a developer, a business owner, or a resident. We are here to serve the public fairly."

Mr. Page was a reporter for the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin and San Bernardino Sun newspapers for six years. During his journalism career, he covered the criminal corruption cases involving former county administrators James Hlawek and Harry Mays.

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Mr. Page has worked for the county since November 2001, serving as chief of staff for former 2nd District Supervisor Jon Mikels and marketing director for the county-owned Arrowhead Regional Medical Center before joining Supervisor Gonzales' staff in December 2004.

The Kouladjian brothers first contacted Supervisor Gonzales' office in 2006 to discuss their plans to develop land in Bloomington for their Master Recovery auto auction business. Later that year, they requested that they be added to the invitation list for Supervisor Gonzales' campaign events.

Since June 2006, two of the brothers' companies – Arshak Kouladjian Land Development and A.V.H. Associates – have contributed a total of \$35,500 to Supervisor Gonzales' campaign, which was received and properly documented.

Their donations, which stopped once the criminal investigation started, were completely separate from the actions for which they are facing criminal charges.

Supervisor Gonzales announced today she would purge those funds from her campaign account by donating it to various youth, senior and community organizations in Bloomington.

“When these brothers started donating to my campaign, I assumed it was because they cared about the community in which they were doing business and believed I was doing a good job,” Gonzales said. “Now that I know different, I will make sure Bloomington residents will benefit from their donations.”

Supervisor Gonzales asked the media to refrain from contacting Bob Page. The District Attorney's Office has recommended that he not discuss the criminal case. And, Mr. Page does not wish to do anything that might jeopardize the successful prosecution of Arshak and Vartan Kouladjian.

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